facilities for rural youth. We are making the self-employment programme comprehensive by converging so may programmes like DWCRA, IRDP, CITRA, etc.

श्री शमशेर सिंह सुरजेवाला: मैंने मंत्री जी से यह पूछा था कि क्या सच है कि 25 हजार लोगों ने पिछले तीन सालों में आत्म-हत्या की है।

MR. CHAIRMAN: That issue is being taken up next week. Why are you putting it up here now? Shri Govindram Miri.

SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, various schemes that are laid down in the reply are already existing. The Government has not deteremined to launch new schemes for employment. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether these existing programmes are sufficient to meet the challenges of rural employment. I would also like to know further whether the Government proposes to take any steps in future for streamlining DWCRA, UNDP and TRYSEM.

SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL: The hon. Member may please give suggestions regarding finance. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI: Are the schemes suficient to meet the challenges of rural employment?

Freedom Fighters' Pension

*103. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of freedom fighters' pension pending for more than five years in respect of the State of Tamil Nadu; and

(b) the steps being taken by Government to dispose of the pending cases?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) There are no cases of freedom fighters' pension pending for more than five years in respect of the State of Tamil Nadu.

(b) In view of reply to part (a) question does not arise.

SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Sir, I congratulate the Minister for giving me an answer that there are no cases pending for more than five years with regard to Tamil Nadu. I appreciate the Government. Now we are celebrating the 50th Anniversary of India's Independence. I want to put my first supplementary. A joint committee for freedom fighters and officials was constituted by the Centre to look into various problems faced by our freedom fighters as also to look into the enhancement of pension in the scheme of 1980, that is Swatantrata Sainik Samman. This scheme is dated July, 1997. The said joint committee made several recommendations including enhancement of pension to freedom fighters on 28.7.1997. What are the steps taken by the Government to implement the recommendations of the said joint committee and if not, why and what are the reasons thereof.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Sir, this scheme was launced in 1972 and at that time the pension that was given was meagre, though in terms of the value of the rupee which has naturally been enhanced but today various representations made from freeom fighters have been regularly processed and what is being done today is to some extent satisfactory. By and large, I would like to say that 74,000 freedom fighters eligible dependents are today drawing pension. In the beginning it was Rs. 200 or so per month whereas today it is Rs. 3,000 apart from other facilities that are extended to them.

SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Sir, secondly I would like to know whether the Government is considering enhancing the pension to freedom-fighters' under the pension schemes of 1980 on the basis of the cost of living index and whether the Government has received any representation for enhancing the pension in any other manner. If so, the details thereof.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: I am sure, the hon. Member is aware that it is linked with the price index.

SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Sir, though this question relates to Tamil Nadu, I would like to put a question about Kerala. ...*(Interruptions)*. . Sir, I request you to please allow me to put it. ...*(Interruptions)*... Recently, the UF Government decided to treat the Vayalar-Punnappara as a struggle for freedom and give pension to the people who took part in it. This decision was taken by the previous

Government. Now I find that procedural difficulties are coming in the way of the widows who have to apply for this pension. These procedural difficulties are standing in their way to approach the Government. I would like to know whether the Government would see to it that these procedural difficulties are removed.

SHRI L.K ADVANI: I am aware that there are problems in respect of certain decisions or suggestions with regard to both Andhra and Kerala. The present Government is looking into this matter because we have had a number of representations against the decision, against the proposal. So, we are examining all these matters.

SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Sir, there are so many cases of pension of freedom fighters which are pending. So far as Gujarat is concerned, these cases have been pending for two years. I know it because they met me and one of them went on a hunger strike. As the hon. Defence Minister has decided to teach a lesson to some people who are hindering the fulfilment of important requirements of the armed forces and by sending them to Siachen, will the hon. Home Minister consider sending to Andaman those bureaurats who are not tackling the pension cases of the freedom fighters properly? I would also like to know the period required to dispose of the pension case of a freedom fighter. It should be 'yes' or 'no'. What is the policy of the Government in this regard?

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Sir, my colleague tells me .... now-a-days Andaman is not a punishment posting. ...(*Interruptions*)... What the hon. Member has said, I can understand it and all that I can say is that the Government is very particular to see to it that all deserving cases of pension of freedom fighters are disposed of expeditiously.

श्री जनार्दन यादव: सभापति जी, मैं आपके माध्यम से सरकार से जानना चाहता हूं कि बिहार में पेंशन के कितने आवेदन लम्बित हैं और उन लम्बित आवेदन पत्रों को कितने दिनों में पूरा किया जाएगा?

श्री लाल कृष्ण आडवाणी: वास्तव में, मेरी जानकारी अब बिहार की अलग से इस समय नहीं है क्योंकि सवाल तमिलनाडु के बारे में था। मोटे तौर पर मैं कह सकता हूं कि जितने सारे आवेदन आए हैं उनको देखकर उनके निर्णय प्राय: हो चुके हैं कि इनको पेंशन दी जानी चाहिए कि नहीं दी जानी चाहिए। जिसका अस्वीकार होता है वह भी उसके बाद फिर से अपनी एप्लीकेशन करता है, रिव्यू के लिए करता है, किसी और के द्वारा करवाता है और कई केसेज ऐसे हैं कि जिनमें 5-5, 6-6 बार रिजेक्ट होने के बाद भी वे फिर से भेजते हैं। हमारा कार्य होता है कि हम संबंधित राज्य को अगर वह कोई नया इविडेंस देते हैं। जिसके आधार पर अपने पूर्व निर्णय को बदलवाना चाहते हैं तो वह हम इविडेंस उनके पास भेज देते हैं। उनमें कमेंट्स मंगवाकर-राज्य से, प्रदेश से कमेंट्स मंगवा करके हम निर्णय करते हैं। मोटे तौर से मैं कह सकता हूं कि अब काफी फुर्ती से सारा काम होता रहा है और बहुत कम ऐसे केसेज होंगे जो अभी-अभी आए हैं और पहले कभी कंसीडर नहीं हुए हैं। जितने केसेज पहले आए उन पर निर्णय कर दिया गया है — उसके पक्ष में या विपक्ष में। विपक्ष में होने के बाद भी वे फिर से आवेदन देते हैं तो उसको लम्बित नहीं मानना चाहिए।

States' Reorganisation Commision

*104. SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES:†
SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government intend to appoint "States' Reorganisation Commission" in view of various demands from different quarters to have new bifurcated States:

(b) if so, what will be its terms of reference; and

(c) by when the recommendations of the Commission will be put in force?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Sir, para 25 of the National Agenda for Governance States that only four new States will be formed, namely, Delhi, Uttaranchal, Vananchal and Chhattishgarh. There is a demand for more States throughout the country. My ex-colleague, Mr. Narayanasamy wanted Pondicherry to be made a State. He was very vocal about it. There

†The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri John F. Fernandes.